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ABSTRACT

The results of visits by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to Arizona's three public universities to observe the status of institutional effort to assess the quality of undergraduate education are presented as a working paper in the final report of the Arizona Board of Regents' Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness. Observations are discussed on the basis of the following: administrative support, leadership, and commitment; institutional assessment programs; organization of assessment; and implementation status and prognosis. Some of the broad recommendations for consideration by the Task Force are: current decennial review processes required by the board should include a more explicit outcomes component; requests for additional funding through decision packages should be explicitly supported; the decennial review cycle should include a comprehensive review of undergraduate education; institutional assessment plans should clearly identify the means by which students are initially tested for basic skills at appropriate levels to engage in college level work; and the information function at the institutional and board level needs attention. Though campus-based efforts to assess the effectiveness of Arizona's undergraduate education are proceeding adequately, they can only be successful in the long run if they have continuing, sincere support from top administration and faculty, and if the results are taken seriously by the board. (SM)

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UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT EFFORTS IN ARIZONA'S UNIVERSITIES: A STATUS REPORT TO THE TASK FORCE ON EXCELLENCE, EFFICIENCY AND COMPETITIVENESS

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In March, 1988, the Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency, and Competitiveness (EEC) of the Arizona Board of Regents contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to visit Arizona's three four-year public universities, and observe the status of institutional efforts to assess the quality of undergraduate education. This report documents the results of these visits. There were several reasons for the Task Force's interest in this topic. First, institutions had been requested by the Board to prepare multidimensional assessment plans as part of an overall "Plan for Improving Undergraduate Education" for 1987-88; institutional plans must be submitted to the Board by May 1, 1988. More importantly, the Task Force was interested in exploring a range of mechanisms designed to improve the effectiveness of undergraduate education, and assessment has been much discussed as a potential lever for improvement.

Both reasons suggested that the Task Force take a serious look at the status of undergraduate assessment at the institutional level to determine both the prognosis for assessment initiatives currently under way, and to determine if assessment constituted a viable, cost- effective means to improve undergraduate instruction.

NCHEMS consultants visited the three campuses during two weeks in March of 1988. Two days each were spent at the University of Arizona (UA) and Arizona State University (ASU), and one day was spent at Northern Arizona University (NAU). In advance of the visit, consultants conferred with institutional representatives by telephone, and reviewed a range of documents provided by the institutions--including drafts of the assessment plans being prepared for submission to the Board. Other documents reviewed prior to or during the visits included curriculum plans, placement tests, existing and proposed student surveys, course evaluation forms, and procedures for departmental or program review. During the visits, interviews were conducted with a variety of individuals. Minimally, however, they included sessions with the faculty/administrative committee charged with planning the assessment effort, with those responsible for institutional data collection such as institutional or student affairs research personnel, with a sample of Deans, and

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with academic affairs staff (See Appendix A for an interview schedule for each campus visit). Each visit also included a session with a top administrator--either the President or Chief Academic Officer.

Visits were intended not only to gather but also to give information. As a result, NCHEMS staff approached these visits as they would a standard consulting assignment: a primary responsibility was to provide advice to each campus about how their efforts might be improved. Consistent with this philosophy, NCHEMS provided each campus with a consulting report presenting a range of observations about their efforts and some suggestions for further direction. As per agreement with the Task Force, these reports were sent directly to the campuses and were intended solely for their use in implementing a better program. We believe that this feature of the visits directly benefited the campuses and also helped ensure the overall success of the project in gathering accurate information about the status of campus plans.

The bulk of this report will present our observations about the status of assessment activities at the campus level. Rather than reporting on each institution separately, we will discuss their individual situations in terms of a set of generic headings that attempt to describe the status of assessment efforts statewide. Given these observations, we will conclude the report with a brief set of policy recommendations for further consideration by the Task Force.

OBSERVATIONS

We present our observations in this section on the basis of four major dimensions. The first, Administrative Support, Leadership and Commitment will address the overall administrative climate for the effort at each of the three campuses. Discussion will consider the general attitude of top leadership toward assessment and their perceived willingness to back it up with appropriate resources and organizational support. A second section, Information Resources and Infrastructure will address the extent and adequacy of management information at each institution--a critical foundation upon which any assessment program must rest. A third, Organization of Assessment will explicitly discuss the scope and structure of institutional assessment plans, including a general review of the strengths and weaknesses of each. A fourth section, Implementation Status and Prognosis will address the degree to which these plans have been fulfilled to date, including committee structures, organizational development, and actual data collection, and will indicate how we expect these plans to progress in the coming year.

- Administrative Support, Leadership, and Commitment:

Common sense and past experience alike indicate the importance of top administrative support for an initiative such as assessment. Not only does such an initiative need sufficient resources to be successful, but it also implies a substantial change in institutional culture. In essence, successful assessment depends upon the institution being willing to act on concrete information to address deficiencies. In addition to providing the necessary resources to accomplish required data collection, this implies

that top leadership be both "information conscious" and be able to demonstrably link decisions taken to a concrete body of evidence. Lacking these ingredients of support, comprehensive institutional assessment efforts are rarely successful.

In general, the situation at the three Arizona four-year campuses is adequate on this dimension. Despite the fact that the stimulus for assessment is external--a Board of Regents mandate for action--academic leadership at all three institutions understands that it is possible to proceed in a fashion consistent with institutional mission. None of the institutions is developing plans in a "cookbook" fashion by attempting to use a "recipe" borrowed from another institution--a phenomenon which we have often observed in other states where assessment plans have been mandated. Moreover, institutional leaders seem to have substantially grasped the fact that institutional initiative with respect to assessment may enable them to address some important local problems concerning the integration and improvement of the undergraduate curriculum.

Within this overall picture, however, patterns of support differ among institutions. UA currently enjoys the advantage of a head start in assessment planning and consequent administrative familiarity with the issue. At the same time, a range of UA undergraduate initiatives currently under way, and funded through several Decision Packages in the past two years has generated considerable momentum in the area of undergraduate education: undergraduate education is consequently comparatively high on the agendas of UA's academic leadership. Moreover, the UA Provost is "information conscious" and is demonstrably interested in obtaining information on the effectiveness of instructional programs--both for internal planning purposes and for communication to interested parties outside the university. Consequently, he seems willing to invest real resources in the effort--a willingness demonstrated by the establishment of a staffed Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE) charged with the assessment mission. In such a climate, our only concern is a need to set priorities and to keep expectations within bounds. The success of CRUE at UA depends upon its ability to sustain a body of long-term research on undergraduate effectiveness--a fact that the Provost understands and supports. Important in the coming years, however, will be to guard against temptations to deploy CRUE's limited resources toward short-term data gathering efforts designed only to address immediate problems.

Because ASU is currently recruiting a chief academic officer, its position with regard to top administrative support for assessment is more uncertain. Indeed, assessment planning has been somewhat encumbered by reluctance to make key staffing, organizational, and funding decisions until a new chief academic officer is on board. This condition is reflected in ASU's working plan for assessment to be implemented next year, which contains no explicit budget or timelines for carrying out proposed activities. At the same time, there appears to be willingness to support implementation of the effort on the part of mid-level academic leadership--in particular Deans in some of the key colleges and schools. Evidence of past willingness to act on evaluation information is provided by ASU's evolving program review process--a process founded on the Board of Regents' mandated decennial review process for all academic programs. While the implementation of program review is not uniform across units at

ASU, several schools and colleges have both taken the process seriously and have added a number of local enhancements to the basic Board requirements. Until the overall leadership situation in academic affairs is clarified, however, ASU's implementation of assessment will also be uncertain.

For NAU, a major advantage is the perceived clarity of the institution's mission. The fact that NAU has chosen to stress undergraduate instruction in itself speaks favorably for the institution's collective willingness to embark upon a meaningful assessment program. Interviews with the President and top academic leadership support this overall perception: all begin with the premise that undergraduate instruction is what the institution is primarily about and that assessment represents an excellent vehicle for improvement. Moreover, the manner in which NAU has chosen to respond to requests of the EEC Task Force for information on a variety of aspects of undergraduate education also provides evidence of broad understanding. Rather than develop separate reports for "assessment", "advisement", and "involvement", the institution charged a single committee to address all three--an action that appropriately stresses the integrated nature of the issue. Finally, NAU has a demonstrated history of using obtained information for decisionmaking through its program review process. The coverage, structure, and timelines for this process go well beyond the Regents' guidelines for decennial reviews, and there is substantial evidence of past use of review results to accomplish actual dollar reallocations among programs.

Because of the critical nature of top administrative support, we believe that the Board should carefully monitor its condition at each of the institutions in the coming years. Important institutional indicators of support will include the degree to which identifiable dollar resources are devoted to the effort, and the degree to which requests to the Board (and to others) for funds to support new programs or program improvements are grounded in appropriate evidence about past and anticipated instructional outcomes.

o Institutional assessment programs:

Successful institutional assessment programs almost never start from scratch. Most rely on a careful blend of existing data resources, judiciously supplemented by a small number of well-designed additional studies or examinations. Even if a large number of new data collection initiatives are contemplated, these too depend upon the existence of a well-conceived structure for institutional management information. Almost all successful undergraduate impact studies, for example, will rely upon the integrity of the student record system and upon the ease with which information from that system can be identified, extracted, and manipulated. Most will also rely heavily on existing "points of contact" with students where data are already collected--such as orientation, registration, placement testing, course evaluation, and existing comprehensive examinations and surveys. As a result, the current condition of management information at any institution, with regard to both its scope and integration, constitutes an important factor in determining the probability of success of a proposed assessment effort.

With regard to basic information infrastructure, we found that the three institutions differed considerably. In the best position is probably ASU, where existing data and analytic resources are in good

shape. The existence of an Office of Institutional Analysis charged with broad research responsibilities means that access to student and other archival databases is comparatively straightforward. Integrity of the basic student record system upon which most outcomes analysis must rest is good, and the construction and maintenance of longitudinal research files drawn from multiple data sources appears routine. Similarly, a research program in Student Affairs, though limited in scope, undertakes a series of well-constructed student surveys and other relevant studies. Not only do such studies yield information in their own right, but they also constitute an opportunity for addressing some broader research questions about levels of student involvement and quality of effort. One area needing attention, however, is information about graduates and former students.

A second advantage enjoyed by ASU is the fact that many of the university's programs are independently accredited, and must consequently undergo a process of external review that often includes assessment of student learning. To a lesser extent, this characteristic is shared by the other two campuses as well. As a result, there are already some local programmatic models available for conducting such activities as follow-up studies of recent graduates and their employers, or for assessing student skills development in practical settings. Many of these programs also require certification testing. Moreover, ASU's new General Studies curriculum provides an excellent structure for evaluation. Not only are the goals of the curriculum well specified, but a proposed periodic review process for all General Studies courses also constitutes an opportunity to undertake a range of data collection efforts aimed at determining overall curriculum impact. In addition, widespread discussion of this curriculum and its goals have already to some extent raised faculty consciousness about the nature and structure of undergraduate education at ASU.

At UA, we find basic information resources to be present and sound, but disorganized. The existence and activities of a Student Affairs Research, Evaluation, and Testing Center is a major asset for an institution of UA's size and type, and the kinds of studies undertaken by this office (for example an ongoing longitudinal student tracking database and several comprehensive student survey efforts) constitute a major resource for an integrated student assessment program. Furthermore, programs such as UA's Upper-Level Writing Proficiency Examination (ULPWE) are both commendable and very unusual at a major research university. Not only does this examination yield outcomes data in its own right, but it also provides an excellent "mid-point" curricular setting for collecting additional assessment information from students. Balancing these assets, the articulation among various data collection and analysis "pockets" at UA is loose to nonexistent. This situation is being addressed, in part, by the establishment of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE), but this office is both new and is not intended to provide a clearinghouse for all management information. Between them, however, CRUE and the Student Affairs research office should provide a good informational foundation for assessment: the Center will continue to do large-scale student flow or behavioral studies using student records and will continue to do most survey research, passing on results to CRUE as needed; CRUE itself will have primary responsibility for assessing cognitive outcomes

and for conducting studies on the impact of curriculum.

The situation with regard to basic informational capacity at NAU is less favorable. For an institution of its size and type, we find NAU seriously underinvested with regard to management information--particularly information about students. Currently the university maintains no regular student survey or alumni follow-up efforts, and only limited longitudinal tracking databases--data resources that are not uncommon at institutions of half its size. To seriously undertake a student assessment program,major deficiencies in "data infrastructure" will need to be addressed--a situation recognized and reflected in the current draft plan for assessment.

At the same time, NAU possesses some structural assets for efficient collecting additional information on student outcomes. First, effective local development of the program review process provides a foundation for extending assessment. Modifying current program review guidelines to require additional data on programmatic effectiveness, as contemplated by the university's plan, will largely answer the need to collect assessment information at the departmental level.Secondly, recent changes in many undergraduate major programs at NAU to include a "capstone" course place the university in a good position to undertake additional assessment. Because such courses are themselves intended to be integrative, student performance in them can be treated as evidence for the attainment of identified curricular goals. Moreover, the "setting" provided by capstone courses is a natural one for "embedding" program-specific assessment activities such as major field comprehensive examinations, integrative projects, or portfolios of student work.

The Task Force should recognize the fact that the efficiency and effectiveness with which assessment can be implemented depends to a great extent on the presence and organization of existing management information. Insofar as these are consistent with other concerns of the Task Force, we would support any recommendations contemplated to integrate and strengthen the information function at each of the three universities.

o Organization of Assessment:

Experience at other institutions has shown that successful assessment requires careful planning and adequate time to develop. It also requires a consciously organized effort--including clear assignment of responsibility for the activity, adequate support, and an ongoing research program founded upon mutually supporting data collection efforts. A primary function of institutional assessment plans--in place at UA and under development for submission by May 1, 1988 at ASU and NAU-- is to outline exactly how the institution intends to meet these requirements. Consequently, we devoted con-siderable attention to an examination and critique of the three assessment plans.

At UA, the groundwork for a comprehensive student assessment effort has been extremely well laid in a Task Force Report produced by the university last year. Compared to others of its type nationally, this Report is unusually cogent and well-written. It recognizes that comprehensive assessment is a complex, multifaceted enterprise that will take time and organization to implement successfully. It also recognizes and addresses two important attributes of assessment work that are often overlooked: the fact that studies of curricular impact must be longitudinal in order to document change

as students progress, and the fact that studies must equally embrace data collection about inputs, processes, environments, and outcomes in order to provide an informed basis for intervention. The centerpiece of the report is establishment of a Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE), reporting to an Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Education, and charged with

(a) carrying out a limited number of ongoing longitudinal studies,

(b) documenting, coordinating, and disseminating the results of additional assessment-related studies and bodies of information held by others, and

(c) working with individualdepartments (several each year) to develop local program-specificassessment instruments and procedures.

Staffing and budget requirements for CRUE are fully outlined in the Report, as are the explicit types of studies that CRUE will undertake. At the same time, we note that the Report and its contents have not been widely discussed at UA, and that student assessment remains a relatively unknown activity among faculty and line administrators. We suspect that this will change when the process actual data collection begins.

Planning at the other two campuses is at an earlier stage of development, as assessment plans are to be submitted in May. In essence, both are "plans to plan"--proposing a process for next year that emphasizes pilot data collection on a wide range of instruments and establishment of a coordination function, with a final decision about ongoing organization and procedures to be made at the end of the year. Neither plan explicitly establishes a "center" on the UA model, though needs for additional staff to coordinate the effort and to provide technical expertise are addressed by both. Both plans also outline an organizational nexus for the effort. At ASU, this is provided by the office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, with appropriate linkages to Deans through such processes as program review. At NAU, the probable organizational setting for the assessment function will also be academic affairs, but draft plans also establish formal linkages between assessment activities and established faculty committees such as Liberal Studies and the Curriculum Committee.

Emerging plans at ASU and NAU also address the kinds of instruments and procedures to be used in assessment. Under consideration at ASU is administration of the ETS "Academic Profile"--a standardized instrument for assessing the outcomes of general education, the coverage of which appears congruent with the goals of the university's General Studies program--as well as several local options. Moreover, like UA, both ASU and NAU intend to undertake a limited number (six or seven) of "pilot projects" in assessment at the departmental level. These will be fielded both to provide institutional experience in using assessment results and to explore some particular data collection techniques. At both institutions, a summary "model" attempts to describe what kinds of data collection options are under consideration for what purposes at what points in the curriculum. At ASU this is embodied in a sequence of phases for program development. At NAU it is shown as a "timeline" documenting proposed data collection options and points.

The Task Force should be aware that considerable changes in these plans may occur as the institutions gain ex-

perience with what works and what doesn't--as indeed has already occurred at UA. It should therefore encourage flexibility in the ways institutions choose to develop their efforts. At the same time, institutions should be held to the spirit of their proposals--particularly when they call for explicit budgetary commitments or when they document the way they will use obtained results.

- Implementation Status and Prognosis:

All three campuses are at a relatively early stage of implementation. None has actually collected data, or even finalized the design of data collection instruments and approaches. Because of an earlier starting point, UA is farthest along, but progress has been largely organizational in the establishment of CRUE and the recruitment of staff. Overall, national experience indicates that all three institutions are about where they should be. Clearly it will be another year before any of these efforts pay concrete dividends. But most implementation efforts that we have observed have taken at least three years to evolve--with the first year devoted to planning, the second to pilot data collection, and the third to full-scale operations.

At UA, the primary accomplishment has been formal establishment of CRUE--complete with assigned staff, equipment, and space. While implementation was slowed a bit last fall, concrete plans are currently being developed for a comprehensive program of longitudinal data collection. Beginning next fall, a group of some 400 new freshman will be tracked through their undergraduate experience, and a range of data on this study group will be compiled. Simultaneously, a group of approximately 200 juniors will be studied as they move through the upper division. Types of data to be incorporated into these longitudinal studies include student record data, performance on placement and proficiency examinations, persistence information, survey data, and data drawn from a series of in-depth interviews exploring perceptions of the campus environment. Pilot testing of the interview technique on a small group of graduating seniors is being contemplated for this spring.

At the same time, two additional ongoing efforts are under way at UA. First, CRUE staff have surveyed all departments and academic units to determine the kinds of assessment procedures and information already available. Results are being incorporated into a "database of databases" as a resource for future studies. Secondly, CRUE staff are beginning the process of identifying a number of target departments for piloting end-of- program major field assessment techniques next year. Current plans are for staff to work with faculty in these departments to help develop appropriate assessment instruments and to aid in interpreting results.

Overall, we believe the prognosis for assessment at UA is good. Administrative support for the initiative is high, limited though adequate resources have been provided, an appropriate organizational structure is in place, and concrete plans for data collection are being finalized. At the same time, we have some concerns about information "infrastructure" and about the need for priority setting in CRUE's efforts in the next few years. There is a pressing need to coordinate a highly decentralized information structure if an efficient assessment program is to be realized. CRUE staff also need to have concrete "marching orders" about research priorities lest their limited resources be dissipated in a range of short-term efforts. We have communi-

cated both these concerns directly to the institution, and are confident that they will be addressed.

ASU is currently in the process of finalizing its assessment plan. A faculty/administrative committee is in place charged with developing the plan, and will likely be the vehicle for overseeing its implementation next year. At present, a faculty member in Educational Psychology has been given the temporary assignment of both chairing the committee and of coordinating the planning effort. Current proposals call for a full-time professional to be brought on board next year to take over these responsibilities. An explicit plan for ongoing research has not yet been decided upon; rather the institution will undertake a series of experimental data collection efforts next year--including pilots in general studies, and in a range of major departments. As noted previously, however, planning for assessment at ASU has been considerably hampered by the absence of a chief academic officer. Not only does this mean that firm budgetary decisions are difficult, but it also has caused some uncertainty about priorities for undergraduate education and the manner in which any instructional initiative should be staffed or housed. When this uncertainty is resolved, ASU should be in a good position to undertake a credible assessment effort.

NAU is also in the final stages of preparing a draft plan for institutional assessment. As at ASU, planning is proceeding under the auspices of a faculty committee, although unlike ASU and UA, all undergraduate topics are being treated in an integrated fashion. Primary responsibility for coordination is currently assigned to the Executive Assistant to the President. Although permanent staffing arrangements are not yet certain, there is a clear commitment to devote necessary resources--including staffing--to carry out the effort. At the same time, there is evident, and we believe appropriate, emphasis on using existing organizational resources and committees to accomplish the task of assessment. Data collection activities proposed for the coming year, as at ASU, consist of a variety of pilot projects--some in general education and some in selected major departments. Because of NAU lacks a number of basic data collection mechanisms such as regular student and alumni surveys, however, considerable attention must be devoted toward developing and gaining experience with such methods in the coming year. These needs are fully recognized in NAU's draft plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these observations, we offer a number of broad recommendations for consideration by the Task Force. Recognizing that the most effective assessment programs are mission- specific and are "owned" by institutions themselves, we first believe that the basic architecture of the Board of Regent's mandate is appropriate. Institutions should be required to establish assessment efforts within broad guidelines, should report how they have funded and organized them, should communicate the lines of research that they are engaged in and how these inquiries are related to their instructional goals, and should demonstrate that they are using the resulting information for decisionmaking.

For the most part, we believe, these objectives can be achieved within the framework of existing statewide processes and reporting requirements. At the same time, we believe that some processes and reporting requirements may

need to be modified to encourage additional assessment practices at the campus level. Integrating assessment activities into such existing mechanisms as the decennial review process, for example, has an advantage of efficiency, as it avoids the kinds of duplicative data--gathering that have proven an obstacle in some states. Making assessment results a clear part of existing and familiar statewide evaluative mechanisms also increases the likelihood that outcomes data will actually be used for decision-making.

Consistent with these arguments, we offer the following broad recommendations:

- Current decennial review processes required by the Board should include a more explicit outcomes component.

Using concrete data, programs under review should present evidence about

(a) the cognitive development of students enrolled in the program against an established and articulated set of knowledge and skills objectives consistent with the program's goals and curriculum;

(b) the success of students after completion of the program, with respect to further education and training, job placement and performance, and satisfaction with the program; and

(c) the adequacy of the program as viewed by important external constituents including, where appropriate, employers, graduate schools, and peers in the discipline. Consistent with practice in other states, moreover, the review cycle should be shortened to a period of five to seven years.

- Requests for additional funding through "decision packages" should be explicitly supported, where appropriate, by information drawn from the institution's assessment program.

Where new initiatives are proposed, institutions should be required to state how evidence of "success" will be compiled, and how the process of obtaining performance information will be made a part of the ongoing campus assessment effort.

- Included in the decennial review cycle should be a comprehensive review of undergraduate education--with particular emphasis on general education.

Academic evaluation at both the campus and the system level is currently undertaken on a program-by-program basis. Nowhere is there an opportunity or a mechanism for evaluating undergraduate education as a whole--though it is claimed to function as such. This is particularly true of the "general education" component of undergraduate instruction which, arguably, is from the state's perspective one of the most important activities that institutions engage in. Consequently, we recommend that a year-long multi- faceted study of undergraduate edu-cation be undertaken at the end of each complete program review cycle. During this year, no other major programs would be evaluated, and all attention would be devoted to examining the structure, functioning, and outcomes of the undergraduate curriculum as a whole. Several states have successfully undertaken such studies as part of the regular program review cycle in recent years--among them Missouri and Illinois--and these

examples might be examined as models.

- Institutional Assessment Plans should clearly identify the means by which students are initially tested for basic skills (reading, writing and computation) at appropriate levels to engage in college level work.

Though not a part of college outcomes assessment, we found procedures for assessing incoming student basic skills to be somewhat haphazard at the three campuses. While we do not recommend adoption of a uniform, statewide basic skills examination such as those in place in Florida, Tennessee, New Jersey, or Texas, national experience suggests that all institutions should adopt basic skills examination programs that

(a) test all incoming students using the same instrument (as opposed to allowing students to "place out" of the examination by means of an ACT score or high school GPA--as sometimes occurs at present),

(b) use these scores to guide a mandatory directed placement program that places students in appropriate remedial settings, and

(c) requires the students so placed to retake the basic skills examination and to achieve a score equivalent to students not identified as in need of remediation.

- Finally, we concur with the findings of other observers that the "information function" at both the institutional and Board level needs attention.

While we believe that proposed assessment initiatives at each institution, if properly organized and supported, will help to remedy current deficiencies in management information, we would also support any additional recommendations that the Task Force might make regarding improvements in information and planning at the three institutions. At the same time, we concur with findings that the Board of Regents should reorient its priorities with regard to information-collecting to primarily information for statewide strategic planning rather than emphasizing information for accountability. While a full treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this report, we would refer the Task Force to a "White Paper" on accountability that we prepared for the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, supplied as a resource to the Task Force staff.

Overall, we find that campus-based efforts to assess the effectiveness of undergraduate education in Arizona are proceeding adequately. In the long term, however, these efforts will only be successful if they enjoy continuing and sincere support from both top administration and faculty, and if the results of assessment are taken sufficiently seriously by the Board to visibly inform decisions that matter.